



# California Veterans Board

*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor*



Volume I, Issue 4

May 2007

## NEWSLETTER

*This newsletter is being published to keep you informed about your California Veterans Board and what they are doing to serve your needs.*

### A MESSAGE FROM VERNON CHONG, M.D., MAJ. GEN. (RET.), CHAIRMAN:

Thank you for reading our newsletter. The CalVet Board initiated this newsletter to keep veterans and other concerned parties informed of the various activities of the Board and what it is doing to advocate for the benefits and rights of veterans and their families. We report on the business of the Board from its regularly scheduled meetings and on the information that is provided by the Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs during the Department open forum. We have endeavored to increase our partnership with the Department in order to better serve our veterans. So that you will know who is representing you, we will provide profiles of our Board members in future newsletters. We encourage you to attend our Board meetings and ask that you tell your fellow veterans about the Board, and encourage their attendance when we conduct meetings in your area. Our meeting schedule is posted on our website. The members of the Board are honored to serve our fellow California veterans. We hope to see you at our meetings and speak with you personally.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL 12-13 CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEETING IN FRESNO AT THE LEGION OF VALOR MUSEUM

- The meeting was held at the Legion of Valor Museum, established August 1, 1991, and staffed by volunteers and supported in part by the City of Fresno. The museum houses thousands of items and papers donated by Legion of Valor members and others. Numerous framed citations, photographs, and exhibits tell the story of America's wars as seen by individual soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Uniforms and equipment of different eras are also on display. The museum prominently displays the uniform and biography of Board Chairman Vernon Chong, a Fresno native.

Contact: Bonnie Kelly  
Executive Officer  
916-653-2041  
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### CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Vernon Chong  
*Chairman*

Randal J. Bressette  
*Vice Chairman*

Jake Alarid  
*Member*

Alice Astafan  
*Member*

Tom Moran  
*Member*

Colin Shadell  
*Member*



California Veterans Board Meeting April, 2007

- The April California Veterans Board meeting was attended by Shannon Major and Taylor Hartline from Senator Dave Cogdill's office (CA District 14), James Mitchell from Congressman Radanovich's office (CA District 19), and Ms Chavez from Assemblyman Arambula's office (CA District 31).
- The Board finalized the bi-annual review of the Board Policies. Several of the policies were felt to be more procedural and were broken out into a newly created "Board Administrative Book." A copy of both documents can be viewed at: [www.cdva.ca.gov/board](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board).
- The Board endorsed a motion to encourage Veterans Home Administrators to approve payment from the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) fund for a representative from the Allied Counsels to attend the California Veterans Board Meetings.
- Member Bressette reported that Secretary Tom Johnson issued a letter for Mr. Bressette's financial office to use to encourage voluntary contributions to the Veterans Quality of Life Fund listed in the California tax return. Due to this letter, his office has raised \$5,000 for the Fund.
- Secretary Johnson discussed the concerns generated by the incident at Walter Reed Hospital. He noted that this was an isolated occurrence and that the VA healthcare system overall meets very high standards. To ensure the same high level of care, the Secretary and Undersecretary Roger Brautigan conducted an inspection of our State veterans homes, and with the exception of a few minor issues, found them to be in good order.
- Secretary Johnson announced that the San Diego CalVet Office is currently open and operating with a full time Manager.

- Secretary Johnson also announced the news that the VA is considering opening clinics at the new Redding and Fresno home sites.

## BOARD HAPPENINGS:

- Member Astafan has made two recent trips to Washington, D.C., at which time she visited House Members to personally deliver letters in support of HR 551. If enacted, this bill removes the service enlistment date, opening eligibility for Cal-Vet Home Loans to all wartime veterans in California, including those who have served in Operation Desert Storm and the current Global War on Terror. Enactment of this measure ensures that those who fought, or are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, will have a greater opportunity to purchase a home in California's high-cost real estate market.
- The Legislative Committee, along with the Executive Officer and Deputy Secretary for Communications JP Tremblay, met with the members of the Veterans Affairs Committees of the Senate and Assembly on April 30 and May 1 for a brief "meet and greet."
- Chairman Vernon Chong and new Board Member Tom Moran attended the April 20 Secretary's Conference where outgoing Board Member Leo Burke was honored for his many years of service to the Board.



Member Tom Moran

- Chairman Chong and Member Moran attended the Yountville Founder's Day event where Chairman Chong presented a resolution from the Board to the Yountville Veterans Home in recognition of its 123rd anniversary.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD:** June 15, 2007, 9:00-12:00 at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, 11301 Wilshire Blvd., Bldg. 500, Los Angeles, CA. These meetings are open to the public – plan to attend and meet the Board, and key members of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for Veterans affairs identifying needs and working to ensure and enhance the rights and benefits of California veterans and their dependents.

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Note to editors: This California Veterans Board Newsletter and previous CalVet Board informational documents are available on the Board's website at [www.cdva.ca.gov/board](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board) and via e-mail from [CalVetBoard@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:CalVetBoard@cdva.ca.gov).